

Letter
to the
GOVERNORS
of the
MARITIME-SCHOOL
*recommending a Mode of preserving
their Object to Posterity, notwithstanding
the Income falls short of the
maintenance of it as a free School.*

BY
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Treasurer.

OCT: MDCCCLXXXIII.



P R E F A C E.

THE substance of the following pages, set in proper view, may evince the propriety of a change in the economy of the Maritime School. The expence of a scholar is encreased by the present mode, and is too large for private munificence to support, and this school has never yet been so countenanced as to afford it any solid pecuniary strength. It hath been often remarked, that the fervor and zeal which at the commencement of a charitable institution diffused warmth and splendor on all around, are but too apt by degrees to languish and die away." The observation may be as applicable to that school as to some other institutions. Where the abject and most distressed part of mankind are the objects, there is the least danger of such inconstancy.

One reason which influenced me to give my thoughts with so much freedom, is the difficulty of finding a fit and proper acting head officer who will take the drudgery of a due inspection, and the hazard of the responsibility as a representative of the fraternity. Such a person there should be, a man known for his probity, humanity, and zeal, and who will devote so much time and care as will enable him to answer for events.

But supposing the work to be in so fair a train as to proceed without any such difficulty: the pecuniary re-

source is not less essential. The school being in itself so good an object, one might imagine that under so respectable a government, it might gain a reputation of no common standard : but still it must rest on the *master*, who is the instrument by which the government is carried on. Therefore I conclude, that the putting him at once in a condition of acting to the utmost advantage, will be the most happy kind of oeconomy for the school ; and that the further the Governours proceed on their present plan, as Governours, the more distant they will be from their object, which is security and stability.

In this light I interest myself in the event. I have thought more than the generality of my colleagues can be supposed to have done. Events have not corresponded with the reasonableness of my hopes. I have not been biased by any partial motives, having consulted only the profit and honour of the school. But as my life is now drawing near its end, I would be more attentive not to follow any false scent, or hunt after an uncertain and precarious good. What I have here set forth seems to be practicable, and may be advantageous. It opens a way for the exercise of the zeal and patriotism of the present Governours of the school, and offers a strong inducement for others to come in and assist in promoting so popular and beneficial an object.

I please myself with the expectation that we shall not only avoid abandoning our object, but give it fresh
strength

strength and energy, remembering "the leading feature in
 "his character, on whom angelic as well as human spi-
 "rits, are directed to fix their attention, *that he went about*
"doing good." Now if the school proposed will tend, from
 generation to generation, to heal the moral diseases to which
 our youth are prone, and promote the great design of add-
 ing strength to our country in the knowledge on which we
 so much depend, what greater good can us poor mortals
 do? The benefactor will do the greatest good, in the
 cheapest manner.

We may flatter ourselves, that many will throw in
 their mite to so benignant a treasury, certain as they may
 be of *seeing* the object of their munificence in a permanent
 habitation, for nautical science: being so devoted, it will
 answer the purpose of promoting the honour and welfare of
 our dear country. As we now stand in much need of moral
 and political succour, schools rank high among the means
 of obtaining it.

The common fault of mankind is procrastination. They
 put off the execution of their best designs, or perform
 them lamely. They gratify some favourite passion, against
 their better judgment; and neglecting opportunities when
 they offer, grasp an illusive good, or try to reconcile things
 opposite in their quality and nature. The Governours of
 the Maritime School, are to guard themselves not to err in
 this sort, in relation to their school. If they are active in a

right pursuit, and in due season, their resolution will secure the good they aim at, perhaps in a higher degree than they ever imagined themselves capable of doing it, though not in the same way.

There is, in my judgment, but little foundation for hope that they can support this school, were they possessed of the constancy, perseverance, and application of school-masters. Who is to be the leader? To take the charge upon themselves in the manner that they have done, seeking for such precarious means of support; and seeing the object so little attended to, where they had garnered up their hopes, is a trial beyond what they can, or what they need bear. It will not give any proof of wisdom or true zeal. They are now to buffet their fortune with the well-strung sinews of a sound understanding, and learn wisdom from experience: and though they may appear to yield, they will conquer. If they obtain the good they aspire at, and set their hearts at liberty, they will act wisely for themselves, and not less wisely or virtuously for their country. Those of whom it was never expected to take an active part, will shew their regard for those who have; and seeing things as they are, form their judgments, and shew their liberality accordingly, on the plan they deem most practicable and most consistent.

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MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

IT will not surprise those who are acquainted with me, that my health, at my time of life, should be in a hasty decay. Indeed I may truly say, my thread is so finely spun, the *fatal sisters* seem to be knocking at my door. For this reason, among others, I petitioned the King for my superannuation, with respect to my late public office; and his majesty hath been graciously pleased to grant it on the most honourable terms.

In these circumstances I am also called upon to decline the treasurership of the *Maritime School*, as an office I should by no means think myself equal to, had you a regular and sufficient supply: but, circumstanced as we are, permit me to give you my opinion; and I will do it with freedom: it is founded in experience and

B knowledge,

knowledge, and devoid of all prejudice, except such as may arise from my zeal for the public good.—Many of you can witness with what constancy I have supported my opinion, in favour of the object, as a *free school*, and devoted to the sons of sea officers, that if it fell, it might fall with honour, and without the reproach of our own hearts for acting inconsistently : but I have learnt to accommodate myself to events as they rise. To support an upright mind is wisdom, and to be just is understanding. I mean to be true to my own honour, and shall therefore propose to you such a salutary expedient, as may in the issue be honourable to you, and beneficial to the community at large.

We see that our representations prevail only in part. I do not conceive any mode so practicable or consistent as that of making over the school to our *superintendant*, for him to take what scholars he pleases, and upon the terms he can afford ; delivering ourselves from the care and anxiety of be-

ing unsuccessful solicitors. It is obvious that we must give him such assistance as the nature of the object may require, the measure of which may be weighed with precision: we shall then know exactly what we are about. If by this means we can contribute to the public welfare, and promote the great end proposed, we need not perplex ourselves with so delicate and *careful* an undertaking. The master being interested for himself, cannot be the less able and willing; and we shall be attentive only to the raising a sum for the school-house with a view to perpetuate the school, and give it dignity and importance in the esteem of our fellow-subjects.

I am aware of the expostulation which some of our Governors may enter into with me. "You objected to our admitting scholars on annual pay for their schooling, and now you would *confine* the school to this mode: Where is your consistency?" I will tell them where it was: it was in trying to make the school consistent. If it was to

be a *free school* for particular objects, and supported by private munificence, it should not be blended with an heterogeneous mixture, by admitting the sons of persons of fortune who needed no aid from us. Besides, to subject ourselves, as directors of a school, to be responsible for the education of the sons of men of fortune, seemed to carry no mark of wisdom.

If we now mean to establish a *Maritime* school, on the genuine basis of a school, we may not only avoid any such responsibility, but we may put the object in a train of being serviceable to the community, upon a larger scale. My conduct is explicable on the principles of our advertisement of May last; (a) but I would not therefore swim
against

(a) The Governors of this FREE SCHOOL, anxious to support an institution so pregnant with beneficence and national honour, have taken in some scholars with annual pay, with a view to make their object the more known among the opulent, and give strength to their original design: But experience has taught them, that
such

against the current, and labour without hope.
It hath been judiciously observed, that, "al-
" though

such pay with scholars is not productive of the good they had in view, but rather perplexes those whose hearts and understandings would otherwise lead them to subscribe.

RESOLVED, Not to admit of any more scholars with pay *for their board and schooling*, but confine the object to the sons of sea officers who have died in the service, or such as, having numerous families, gladly avail themselves of so generous and honourable an institution.

RESOLVED, That a copy of the above resolution be sent to all the Governors of the school.

. In consequence of these resolutions, the Governors revert entirely to the first intention of making a free school; meaning to be instrumental to the happiness of the parent, and the future fortunes of the son; flattering themselves also, that, by the liberality of their fellow-subjects, they shall be enabled to procure a convenient site, and build a proper school, and take a greater number of scholars than their present pecuniary ability will allow of.

“ though *fortune* seems to be a universal
 “ mistress, *prudence* is hers ; and that when
 “ we

There is already received a number of scholars, the sons of officers under the description above-mentioned ; and others of the same class are frequently offered, who call for all the tenderness of parental affection, and manly regard to the memory of the brave.—It is therefore hoped, that the first officers, and the Governors in general of this school, will take an active part, and propagate the knowledge of this determination, and solicit the contribution of their friends, that this plan, now reduced to so plain and simple a proposition, of so generous a complexion, may give a proof of genuine patriotism, and add splendor to our national kindness and humanity, to those who deserve so well ; and, as far as private benevolence extends, promote the honour and substantial felicity of our country.

Considering the extent of the education given, with respect to the several masters, it is not supposed this object can be supported for a less sum than 800l. to 1000l. per annum. The present annual subscriptions amount to about 600l ; and the school is possessed of about 1600l.

The friends of the school, in East India, have been already very beneficent ; and the Governors are flattered, that they shall receive a further supply from that

“ we are guided by prudence, we are sur-
 “ rounded by all the other divinities.”

If you peruse my letter, on the subject
 the school, written last year, you will also
 find

that quarter: In the mean time, it is hoped that
 the blessings of heaven will attend every one, at home
 and abroad, who throws in his mite, or more prince-
 ly mark of liberality, towards the support of so useful
 an institution; which, if properly attended to, can-
 not fail of promoting the honour and welfare of our
 country.

By Order of the General Court,

JOHN PUGH, Sec.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are received by the fol-
 lowing BANKERS;

Sir Charles Asgill *and Co.*—Batson *and Co.*—Boldero
and Co.—Lombard Street; Exchange Banking
 Company, St. James's Street; Messrs. Croft *and*
Co. Pall Mall; Childs—Goslings *and Co.*—*and*
 Hoares—Fleet Street; Mildred *and Co.* White
 Hart Yard, Lombard Street; Hankeys *and Co.*
 Fenchurch Street;

Also, by Jonas Hanway, Esq; of Red Lion Square,
 Treasurer.

find what my ruling principle was at that time, viz. "Encouragement to our mathematical master should be considered as a primary object: *and in order to give stability to the school*, I apprehend that a part of our fund should be appropriated to the payment of the salary of a *foundation master*, that the world may comprehend *we are determined, if possible, to give the school a permanent existence.*" (a)

I was at that time in hopes of a supply to support a *free school*; yet I considered an establishment to a master, by a salary, as I now consider it; though I apprehend that a *more certain* and distinguished mode of encouragement, to obtain a stability for this institution, will be by a respectable *school-house*, and such appendages as may at all times draw masters of reputation, and afford the

(a) Letter from the Treasurer of the Maritime School at Chelsea, to his friend ———, Esq. with various proposals for the establishment of the school on the most consistent and permanent principles, page 13. Art. X.

the stronger inducement to them to be attentive to the object.

If it is asked, "though as treasurer, or
 " as a private member of our fraternity,
 " you could not undertake to be responsible
 " for the sons of noblemen and gentlemen
 " of fortune: did you think yourself qualified to take charge of the education of
 " the sons of those who might depend on
 " *private* munificence?" I answer, no: I always meant to trust to able masters, presuming that if *they* could not perform the executive and scientific part, I had no reason to believe the work would be done with any propriety.

As to a real *schoolmaster*, I venerate the character: I consider his charge as giving him a title to pre-eminence: I uncover my head when I meet such a person conducting his scholars to the worship of God, or taking an airing, though I should not have any personal acquaintance with him: but I do not therefore flatter myself, or any of
 my

my colleagues, that we can lay claim to this honourable appellation.

The nature of our constitution, joined to my experience, lead me to make some further reflexions on our situation. I am confident that many of the instructions given our masters are valuable ; but a committee composed of forty persons, of different turns of thought and degrees of knowledge, require many checks on themselves. We complimented our Treasurer, that is, so far as difference in opinions would permit. He saw the office was too arduous for him, and repeatedly desired to give it up, but submitted to your representations.

As the case now stands, for we need not go deep into the matter respecting the past, the question is, if we may not, by a generous and judicious effort, obtain all the *good* we ever could consistently aspire at, and cut our way through the difficulties which surround us : it appears to me that we may do so. If the school is a good object, let it

it be supported as schools are, which depend on the skill and industry of their respective masters, shewing it such countenance as will give it a superior lustre.—If the question is asked, “why we do not proceed on “the principles of private munificence?” The answer may be “the private munificence appears to be inadequate.” But there are other collateral reasons connected, which check our efforts.

1. The vicinity of London makes living too expensive for such a free school.

2. A decayed house, in which we have two or three years lease, will require many expences: if we are to keep it for any length of time the charge may be heavy.

3. The expence of each scholar, considered as supported by private munificence, is too large.

4. Discharging scholars to the satisfaction

tion of parents, within a reasonable time, is a most difficult task.

5. The expectations which are formed of our ability and inclination, exceed what is expected from a common school; and we have acted as if constrained to shew a tenderness, and not represent any scholar as *improper for science*.

6. The expenditure of our current cash: the subscriptions for some time past not keeping pace with our expence.

7. Our fund being so small,—with the latent sources of danger and inconvenience, which may be foreseen.

Such observations naturally lead me into this turn of thought, how improbable it is that we shall establish our school by pure munificence, under the influence of our present fortune. Without pretending to the gift of prophecy, I conclude that we

we shall not make a good figure in our present path.

You will permit me to go a little further, and candidly ask: Who amongst us, approved by the generality, will step forth and take the charge of this object? Can the school be conducted without some person distinguished as an active chief, and ostensible representative of our body, whether he shall be in the person of a Treasurer or any other member?

The method I propose, we may be assured, will be generally acceptable to noblemen and gentlemen who think well of the school, and wish to have their sons admitted; and this may also be the case of many of our subscribers who are advocates for the general object: as a *navigation* school, even naval officers may approve of this measure.—Abstracted from considerations beyond the pure dictates of prudence, the question is, if, under our circumstances, we can adopt a more judicious measure,
meaning

meaning to avoid anxiety and difficulty, and the hazard of losing our object? Such of our colleagues as were the most inclined to favour the general principle of admitting scholars with pay, will I presume concur, with this advantage, that they will not be responsible, and that the master will, for his own reputation and his interest, see that the scholars shall be educated with all due care and sense of duty.

In taking a calm view of the united force of these arguments, candour and good sense prepare us for a retreat, honourable in itself, and profitable to the community. If we wait to be beaten out of the field, though all our treasure, and labour of person and thought past cannot be said to be rendered of no effect, yet surely it is not an eligible plan. Mankind generally judge of things by events. It is our task to make a virtue of necessity, and rise superior to fortune: and if we can do a greater good, we shall stand in a more exalted rank. Every Governor will naturally revolt against an indolent

dolent or pusillanimous opinion, that
 might prompt him to die for fear of dying.
 Our reputation is concerned, not so much
 about the mode, as that the main design of
 doing a public good shall be answered.
 What I advance is the result of my most
 serious and thoughtful hours, and I may
 venture to assure you, that serious and
 thoughtful hours are no strangers under my
 roof. I have no passion to gratify, nor any
 interest to serve. I yield up my favourite
 object, for I do not find it to be sufficiently
popular; and I believe it is not popular,
 because it is not generally thought to be ne-
 cessary. I intend to promote your honour
 as well as my own. If we convert a retreat
 into a victory, we shall act like able ge-
 nerals: it will not only be an example
 worthy of imitation, but an admonition to
 avoid danger by circumspection. If we take
 advantage of the resources which our ex-
 perience furnishes, our intentions being
 upright, and our hearts undismayed, we
 may compass our object, if it is to be ob-
 tained; and convince the world that we
 have

have been seeking the public good, devoid of any private or narrow interest; and if we obtain the means, we shall literally erect an edifice to the honour of the British nation, in the representative of *the Maritime School*.

I see no reason for us to lament the change proposed: it may be much for the best. I have lived long enough to know that life is a scene of vicissitudes, or a complication of revolutions, as if it were so intended by the all-merciful Author of nature, to exercise mankind in the various duties of life, on the event of which their felicity ultimately depends. The very idea of *improvement*, implies a *change*; and if our fraternity can now change the scene from a state of apprehension of not succeeding, or of doing a less public good, to quietness of mind, and the doing a more extensive public service, it may content all parties, and be worthy of our zeal, and the benignant principles on which we act. If we can perform the same service on a *larger scale*, and by means which will stand the test, will

it not be preferable to our present situation of mistrust in our pecuniary ability, to give so expensive an education.

We might flatter ourselves that the opportunity is favourable; that it invites us with blandishments; and promises success: but experience proves that when war ceases, every thing which may seem to relate to war is apt to cease; and our institution being considered as in an infant state, there are many potent reasons which may determine us not to trust to events against appearances, but prepare for defence: if we disperse the force which we yet have under command, we may render it impossible to make an honourable retreat.

To admit free scholars without a reasonable assurance of being able to support them through their education, carries with it marks of confidence which our situation renders ungraceful, if not *dangerous*. If we put our school into the hands of an able master, who is to find the

C

means

means of supporting his scholars, as other scholars are usually supported, it seems to be the safest way of preventing evil and doing good. This demands our serious attention while we are yet able to execute such a plan. Our situation is not of the nature of a common charity-school ; but if it were, a *school master* should act with the utmost freedom and independency. He is a little sovereign and a judge ; he executes his own sentences, and acting for his own interest and emolument, depends on his own steadiness and knowledge for his success. Our superintendant, whom I consider as master, is now subject to be discharged by the decision of a majority of Governors, who are also subject to vary in sentiment. This is a tie, but it is a tie of a very different nature from his acting for himself. We give him as our deputy the name of *superintendant* : this is an ambiguous appellation, compared with that of *master*, supposing him to be really master in act and deed. As he is circumstanced, he cannot support that dignity which is most characteristical of his

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employ-

employment, and that superiority which ought to accompany the chief of a school, who is the image of sovereignty in his own domain. Being a man of ability, he will shew it so much the more; and act with the most energy, when he is least controlled.

You are sensible that in some parts of life, council and debate, and laboured forms of decision, are so many solemn insignificancies, compared with the sum and substance of business. But as taxation is essential to legislation, in the great concerns of a state, forms and pecuniary power support each other in all parts of life. Our rules for the conduct of our school, are drawn with labour and precision, and the purest intention for public good: the executive part is the essential part, and this depends on the master; and as the whole transaction is under one roof, he will be much less subject to be imposed on than we are as a community.

The great majority of us who undertake to direct a mathematical and navigation

school, know nothing of mathematics, or navigation; we depend on the masters, and they are so far the arbiters of our fortunes: there are amongst us a few who are men of science; but does it appear that these have leisure from their own occupations and family affairs, to discharge that part, with such circumspection, as ought to constitute a responsibility to the parents of the scholars? Do they mean to make themselves responsible? I presume they will say, no: it cannot be expected they should say, yes.

I long since foresaw, and foretold many of the difficulties which would attend our enterprise, supposing it had been confined to a deed of munificence, and to the sons of naval commission-officers only, as I originally meant; and supposing, perhaps romantically, that one soul might animate our generous fraternity; but still presuming the school would be put into the hands of able masters. When it received scholars of so many different denominations, and those so very young; and the resolutions of one

committee were frequently cancelled by a subsequent meeting: when we received pay for the sons of gentlemen, who could take care of their own children; it appeared to me, that our constitution as a school, was as defective as the executive part was misunderstood. We aspired at doing more than I had a *clear conception* of; and I must ingenuously tell you, that you flattered me, 'till I got out of my depth. I am now struggling to get on shore, yet grasping my object as if I meant to save it, or sink with it.

The difficulties we have struggled with, have been of so complicated a nature, it is wonderful, at this hour, that our school has existed so well; and the more, as we have differed from every other institution, depending on private munificence. We have not permitted ourselves to use the language of charity, nor the *word*; and yet *depended on charity*. We flattered ourselves that we should obtain an ample support upon a principle more generous, and superior

rior in quality, to that upon which all other benevolent institutions stand. One secret reason for this, was the mixture of those who paid for their schooling, with the scholars who were supported on munificence, exhibiting a proof of our error in this heterogeneous composition.

A two guinea subscription was also construed by many as if it would allow of *presentations* of scholars. Mistaking a good inclination for doing a kindness, for an ability for doing it, we might easily build our hopes on a precarious foundation. The numerous distinctions which we made of scholars, gave a strong evidence of our generosity, but not of our clear conception.

Whether our not speaking the language of charity, has really checked the liberality of our fellow-subjects or not, our meaning was to avoid offence with regard to the honour of our object, and the tenderness we considered to be due to it. This refinement seems to prove, that we soared above
our

our proper element. It doth not follow, that if we had talked any other language, the times would have been suited to our object, though our object might be of a nature well suited, as far as it would go, to promote a national benefit. Supposing it supported with a liberal hand, and confined to the sons of commission-officers in the navy, it was reasonable to believe many of their widows would avail themselves of our institution, and that we should do one of the most generous actions that individuals, in a private capacity, can well perform.

Give me leave also to observe to you, that we have constantly used the term *foundation*: we have been very fond of the name, but the reality of the thing we have never had the good fortune to enjoy, in any sense of pecuniary ability, though it has flattered the hopes of those who were interested in our having a real foundation; I mean so much money as is adequate to the support of such an object. To whatever

cause our limited powers for carrying on such a school may be ascribed, it is reasonable to presume, the exigencies of the times render individuals more attentive to their domestic expence, for their own children, than for the education of the children of other people.

When I look back to the outset of this enterprize, it was chiefly on pecuniary inability, that the diffidence which I expressed, was founded; other members were more sanguine. I must ingenuously confess I was not then so much aware of the difficulties arising from a variety of sentiments; and though I had the mortification to find that none of us had any experience, it was supposed that we should learn what ought to be done. In several enterprizes of a voluntary and benevolent kind I had large experience, but not in such an interesting charge as that of scholars, or as a *school master*: I never thought of more than of putting the object in a train to be conducted by proper masters.

We

We have now carried on our campaign for near six years, with great labour ; and it is above four years and a half since the school was opened. The first error in taking the scholars so young, set us as it were in a sand ; and by retarding our voyage, we lost the favourable opportunity of our market respecting war. We are now to take things as we find them, and in order to secure a victory, change the plan of our operations. To this end we may fairly urge as reasons for our conduct :

1. That the care of the education of such young persons is an object of great importance, and requires great *vigilance* as well as knowledge.

2. That we have established such salutary regulations as promise great benefit to the community, with respect to science as well as morals ; and therefore we can with the utmost propriety recommend the superintendant as a *master*, to act for his own account.

3. That

3. That we mean to assist him in a proper manner, with a view to establish a school on a large scale and a permanent principle.

4. That to this end we intend to put part of the fund we are possessed of, into the hands of two or three trustees, as the foundation stone of a subscription for building a respectable school, on a fit site, and at a proper distance from the metropolis, where it may enjoy every advantage necessary.

4. That we therefore invite all our Governors to continue their subscriptions, at least till the school shall be built; and to solicit their friends for benefactions for this useful and generous purpose; meaning to erect such a structure as shall be proper, and such as will grace our nation, presuming that it will tend to promote our naval interest, disseminate a naval spirit, and render navigation in every view the more universally familiar.

5. That whatever sum shall be subscribed shall be laid out in the most frugal and proper

per manner in promoting the great object in view.

6. That in the mean while, we will devote such a portion of the fund we possess as will be necessary to assist the superintendant in the present situation at Chelsea, to maintain in part such scholars, as we shall think proper to recommend, at least for one year; and to admit such as he shall approve, consistent with the support of the school, and his private agreements for scholars.

Such a candid and benignant proem to a subscription paper, might give a lustre to the *Maritime School*, and exhibit a proof that the Governors are attentive to events, and by no means indifferent to their object. If it appears that there is not a fair prospect of maintaining the school, in its present mode of support, we shall surely demonstrate our wisdom by a change. We have tried several expedients, viz. Free scholars only; then mixing others who paid for
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their schooling ; then reverting to our first generous principle of private munificence, and confining it, in a great measure, to the sons of navy officers : but none of these have operated to make us rich enough to prevent a displeasing prospect. Every thing, which in our present circumstances militates against us, may be considered as motives to the trial of the plan proposed, and the method I now recommend.

There are further reasons which might be urged. We have heard it said, “ that
 “ the sons of sea officers stand a better
 “ chance, in time of peace, to obtain
 “ *births* on board his majesty’s ships of war
 “ than the sons of indifferent persons.”
 This might be true, supposing navy officers of interest, who do not attend to the school, attended to the scholars. As Governors, we do not pretend to follow the scholars into life, or after they cease to be scholars ; but taking upon ourselves to act so zealous a part, we find parents are naturally

ally led to imagine the school is to see that its labours be properly applied.

The difference between the free scholar and him who pays for his education, is obvious. In general the scholars may be benefited by a mathematical education carried on to a certain degree of perfection : but the scholar, whose parents are not wealthy, may not only have the worst chance of timely provision, but he will feel the disappointment the most : others whose parents are affluent, can more conveniently wait, or find employment by improving their studies through a longer period, supposing a school unshackled, by the rules we prescribe upon our saving-plan.

Twelve years ago there was a great scarcity of petty officers ; and twelve years hence, the same may happen, should they be wanted ; but at present there is a great overflowing. Still the education is of the most useful kind ; and whatever shall be the fortune of our school, we may consider

sider it as an institution of sound policy, and properly conducted, must be of great service. The method I propose, countenances those whose fortunes will not expose them to any inconvenience, if they should not be immediately provided for, and therefore demands a preference. Upon the principle I am now reasoning it goes further, in as much as what it loses on the humane side, it gains in the general freedom of our fellow-subjects, in educating their children as they please, when they can afford to pay for them ; and in this case will not be threatened with loss and disappointment, if they cannot send them to sea at the time they wish to do it. In the mean while, the method I propose will not, I presume, make one good sea officer the less in the kingdom, but probably increase the number considerably, to be ready for some *great day* of military account.

A respectable *local* establishment will, to all human appearance, do half the business we have in prospect ; and an able and intelligent

telligent master will complete the work, particularly if he is versed in naval discipline, and a man of an humane and considerate disposition, with a mechanical genius, just such a one as our *superintendant* appears to be. Such a master in such a house, will always have as many scholars as he can consistently take charge of; and a greater number he ought on no account to take: the admitting of a greater number of scholars than can be attentively watched, with respect both to morals and erudition, is one melancholy cause of the education of our youth being so often defective.

You may consider me, in respect to the school, as making my last will and testament, meaning to do all the good I can to my latest hour. I feel my reputation concerned, not to be an idle spectator, though my time of life might warrant it. The object which I recommend to others, more interested than myself in the happiness of posterity, I mean to pursue; and I shall esteem it, as if it were an acquisition of
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private fortune, if I should be so happy as to suggest to you what may in the end prove agreeable to you, and likewise a public benefit.

Let us strive to advance our reputation by a consistency of conduct without any prejudices, looking forward with prudence, and providing for events. Thus our lamp may burn bright, instead of being extinguished in an offensive manner. This is what I am anxious to guard against: this is the resource which my mind suggests; and I refer it to your serious consideration, as the greatest good, obtainable in the most easy manner. After all our social efforts and generous toils, let not our school drop into oblivion!—If there is a method by which the advance that we have made in knowledge, may be preserved to our country in full lustre: if the grand object still offers itself with a smiling countenance: if the true end we wish to see accomplished is the improvement of nautical science, whether it be by such young persons as are less
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the favourites of fortune, or by the sons of those who are rich enough to pay for their education, let us not lose our object, for then we shall not do any good to either. Let us rather try if we can make a *local* establishment of dignity, to afford proper encouragement to a *master*, to enable him to set off, and through succeeding ages to act with such countenance as may promise a brilliant success. If it depends on the current of its true and natural channel, it is most evident, that our patriotic intentions may be answered, even upon a larger and more liberal scale than any we have yet used.

If we can put our object in its proper course, and deliver ourselves from anxiety, we may yet do a notable service, and render the effects of our zeal permanent. If our subscriptions are devoted to the building of a school till the sum is completed, which may be in a short time, every one will behold the effects of his generosity. Such a local establishment may be rendered

dered a suitable encouragement to a succession of masters, who may carry it on for their own benefit, in this line of science, and make a great number of the best moral as well as ingenious subjects. We may keep within our depth : we may prove to the world that we understand our present situation, in regard to that which ought to be done, on patriotic principles, for the common good.

I need not remind you how much the great majority of the world judges of the propriety of a measure by the event ; and whatever we may think of our deservings, our cause may suffer for *want*. By the change proposed, we may give a shining proof that our passion is not for private, but public good ; and if we are yet in time to give existence to a greater object than we could at any period have had in immediate view, by soliciting for private munificence to *support* our scholars, we shall rise with vigour and splendour. Instead of swimming against the tide, we may glide on with the current of fortune,

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thankful

thankful to Providence that things are as they are. The public which we profess to serve may be served, and an essential good performed. If we put our school into the hands of our *superintendent* for his account, he is able, and well qualified, and being free from control, will exert himself for his own interest.

We are under no engagements to do any thing for any individual, to the destruction of our school ; and therefore have it in our power to throw in such an auxiliary force as may encourage our master to undertake the charge of the school, for his own benefit. I have the preservation of the school so much at heart, that, poor as I am, I will continue my annual subscription of 5l. 5s. and contribute 20l. to be applied towards erecting a proper building, at such a distance from London, as shall enable the master to maintain in full force a discipline suited to such a school. As an honest man, and understanding what he pretends to teach, he will admit boys at a proper age ; and if he should find them unfit for science,

as an honest man, he will make a fair report to their parents; his own reputation being concerned in taking this part. It would be absurd to suppose that every boy, whom a fond parent would wish to be bred to the sea, should be qualified by his natural mental powers, to make a figure in that line. Common experience teaches us what a vast difference there is in boys, and how soon it may be discovered, though our tenderness has, in some instances, defeated our purpose. The school proposed will have no courts, nor committees, nor a variety of opinions to contend with; nor any anxious solitudes for the means of a support to be drawn from private benefactions.

In the present situation of our school, the greater the number of scholars which we may receive into it, to all appearance the poorer we shall be, and the more rapidly verge to dissolution. The contrary may happen to the school proposed, provided the master does his scholars justice, which
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for his own interest will be attended to with vigilance.

As to any superstitious affection for each other in our associated capacity, it would not be worthy of us as men of understanding, untied as we are by any political ligament: if we are instrumental to the erection of a school-house that will stand for ages against the inclemency of the skies, the name of *the Maritime School* will give us all the renown we can reasonably wish for, as it will preserve all the good that we had in view, respecting the great end of national benefit.

Experience teaches us, that our present constitution stands on the foundation of private beneficence, and that a change is necessary to render it capable of doing a national benefit. I flatter myself you will not suspect me of a want of feeling for those who might be benefited by our present method; for when we consider the precarious duration of our object, and the ha-

ward of injuring the very scholar we mean to serve, we must guard ourselves against the danger of being dupes to our own compassion, and act a generous part, as we stand related to the public. We may flatter ourselves, that if the proposal, now under our consideration, is communicated to the Governours of our institution, in terms worthy of their attention, it will meet their applause, on the same liberal principles on which they are ambitious of acting.

Duration should be our first object ; it is the criterion by which we are to judge, and the issue to which we should leave our cause, unawed by any consideration but such as is founded in justice and the reason of things. I have already written two pamphlets, the principles of which, you have generally adopted. There are now several rules which offer themselves as necessary to form our judgment.

1. That a school depends on a leader as much as an army on a general ; and who so proper to lead as the master of it ?

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2. The education we have given is expensive for a charitable foundation.

3. When a number of proper objects offer, we find it easy to take them into the school, but difficult to put them out.

4. There is more expected of us than we can perform. We take a boy who may prove as unfit for a mathematician as I am for a porter. We keep him till he is fourteen years old : his parents do not find him qualified : our conduct is secretly or openly objected to : we are importuned to keep him still longer, till he can be provided for at sea : or he is sent to some other school. Some boys who are really qualified are sent to another school, because we cannot keep them after they reach the age of fourteen. What satisfaction can we derive from this process ?—The same expence bestowed on one boy, who is not of a genius suited to a navigator, might qualify two others, and we might do a real service to the public ; but whilst we are divided be-

tween policy and humanity and a variety of sentiment, we render our object so much the more perplexing as well as expensive.

5. Let the parent pay for the education of his son as in common life, and even parental fondness will be controlled by reasons of prudence, and no violence will be committed upon the powers of the mind. Let there be full freedom, as under an intelligent master of a school, acting for himself: if he is an honest man, he will not take an improper boy: or he will not force on him a study above his natural powers: he will judge as a *master* of a school ought to judge, and commit no violence on poor human nature. If a scholar requires a longer time, the master will not be constrained to leave him, till he is fully qualified, let his age be what it may. In some cases we find young men of 16 or 18 qualify themselves by study, to be admitted on a quarterdeck, and learn, in time of war, to act as petty officers; and if they should happen to reach their 24th year before they are qualified for
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a lieutenancy, I do not conceive how the public can suffer.—I am now treating my subject with candor as a member of the community at large, as well as preparing to give the most weight and dignity to a school for navigation.

6. It is no less against our school, respecting its permanency, that our *school-house* at Chelsea is old; inconvenient; wanting much repair; and upon a lease of three years; much confined in space for such recreation, as boys naturally seek for; and being so near London, is against an institution of a munificent kind. A situation in a remoter distance, where the provision grows upon the spot, might do much better.

7. If the master were enabled to act according to his own experience and discretion, he might support the school upon the broadest bottom. Carrying with him all the advantages he has acquired under us, with the recommendations of the navy officers,

officers, who have occasionally given us their assistance, and also of those to whom he is personally known, he may appear in a much higher point of view.

8. At all events, if we cannot retain the object of the school, respecting our munificent design, I hope we shall retain at least the name and power of the *Maritime School*, as deriving a dignity from the original intention, and from the high rank and quality of many lords and gentlemen whose names have appeared as Governours, and particularly in honour of the great personage who is the *president* of it. If we cannot gratify our benevolence in maintaining the school in favour of the sons of sea officers, the master may dispense his intelligence with power, and we do our part in affording him all the countenance he may deserve. Thus we may promote our object as zealots for navigation, and advocates for morals and discipline, with renewed zeal and benignity. Let us recollect that it is an essential property of a school, that the master

ter of it should be Lord Paramount, and appear as the greatest man in the kingdom with respect to his scholars.

9. As things now appear, it may be asked, What is our pecuniary ability for the timely arrangement proposed? The sum on the first of this month, exclusive of the furniture of the school-house, consisted in the sum of 2400l. 3 per cent. with 100l. per ann. for about three years to run. In the mean while the annual subscriptions may be called 400l. to 500l. This in the esteem of some may appear sufficient to remove all apprehensions, and put us in a situation of security; but to look forward, as we ought in all reason to do, meaning to enjoy a political existence, we must consider the expence of 11 to 1200l. per ann. as a formidable object! It carries with it a strong lesson that we ought not to hazard the existence of our school; nor consequently our credit with the world, nor with the parents of our scholars, who may trust to our prudence.

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We have it now in our power to give such aid and assistance as will gain us reputation, and prepare for greater events; therefore, if we are wise we shall think in time, and not amuse ourselves with expectations, unless they are well founded, lest we should run our vessel on a rock, and "leave not a wreck behind!"

To go on for a year or two, and enter annually into new engagements, though we should inform the parents of the scholars that our pecuniary abilities will probably not permit us to gratify our wishes, is a gloomy kind of a contract. It does not imply an obligation, that so long as we have a farthing at command, it shall be devoted to them; yet it may cut us off from the means of providing a school for the great purpose of naval military tuition.

We are to examine our situation in a comprehensive view, and consider that the parochial institutions and charity schools for the poor in this kingdom, are either supported

ported by a compulsive tax, or appearing necessary for the indigent and distressed, are maintained by voluntary subscriptions. Our school does not fall within either of these predicaments, but depends on a precarious support, rendered the more difficult by the expence it creates. As to the waiting for any casual supply, if any such good fortune should happen, such supply may be applied to the same good object. Let us secure the existence of the school, and then be as benevolent and humane to individuals as we are able.

Long experience has taught me that permanent local establishments are absolutely necessary, to the success of all such enterprises. The changing of quarters, and renewing of expences, is renewing of dangers and difficulties, and often sets the vessel on a sand.

There is no magic in the name of a *foundation*, and whatever resolutions may be taken with regard to the maintenance of a
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free school, on private munificence, money must be the instrument of its support. Let us be jealous of our credit as connected with the honour of our school, and under every circumstance, consider our object with a view to the *public good*.

In every system of politics, men often change from one mode of dispensing good to another, as experience may dictate, and their mental and pecuniary abilities are equal to. Where they have an established revenue, they accommodate themselves to it, and where there is no such establishment, they chuse the most serviceable mode of rendering their labours beneficial. In the course of my experience, I have observed that some institutions have spent their last farthing, and even run in debt, in confidence of the care of Providence, and very few such have risen out of their own ashes. Some, I have observed, drag on an impoverished state, and expire in an *atrophy*. Much depends on the nature of the object, the harmony of a community, and
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a regular conduct: but in all cases it is necessary to distinguish times and seasons. When a man could convert 1000 l. 3 per cent. into 900 l. and such ability is fresh in his memory, it is presumable he would be more liberal than when he can make only 600 l. of it, the price of living remaining much the same as it was before. If his taxes rise in proportion to such diminution of the value of his money, he will necessarily become the more reserved how he parts with it. The real riches of a country may be the same; but the spirit of munificence will be less profluent. This argument may operate against our obtaining money for a building; but this is to be for once only, and as an object we see the end of; and a more practicable scheme than the *maintenance* of such a free school; at the same time that the object of a navigation school is of so manly a complexion. Our present view partakes much of the generous and the zealous; but it proves expensive, beyond the measure of our conception when we sat out; and if we cannot

not do as we meant and intended, it does not follow that we are to give up our object, with respect to its usefulness to the public. We should do what is most fit, under our circumstances; and by our credit with our fellow-subjects, still perform an essential piece of service; acting on the most approved principles of human prudence, and in the best manner we can, for the public good.

As to the making the King's ships schools for navigation, they are the best schools, when the school masters for teaching navigation are able in their line, and sufficiently encouraged to do their duty with zeal and attention, otherwise the service falls very short. Capital ships in harbour in time of peace, might be rendered good schools by the means of good masters. As to smaller ships, the office of school master is not held up as an essential object, and cannot be supposed to diffuse much knowledge of the kind. The number of petty officers in them is so few, and the kings pay

to the master so small, it is not an object to a man of any science ; schools on land therefore become very useful to a Marititime nation. If in this view we can devote the *two* guinea subscription, which the majority now bestow, to the giving stability to so important an object, I apprehend that we shall act wisely. To see a well established seminary for such kind of knowledge rise, by the smiles of Providence, from so inconsiderable a beginning, will surely do honour to every benefactor. *A good local establishment, by a structure of dignity and use, will probably acquire the countenance,* not of the subscribers only, but also of their children, through many generations : they will all enjoy the benefit of a healthy situation, and of the best masters, in the important science of defending their country.

I cease to call ourselves Governors, because the nature of the thing will not admit of that appellation, when the master shall act for his own account ; but we shall

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have the happiness of being delivered from the cares and perplexities which attend our government, leaving it to one man, as a master, upon the common principle of human intercourse, of paying so much for the service done; and if this proves a prosperous means, we shall be the happy instruments of it: and if it is not exactly the thing we originally meant, it may be a more fortunate expedient in the issue, because more permanent; and consequently the higher gratification it ought to afford.

If the proposal is built on such ground, as may give the superstructure stability, it deserves your serious attention. We may act by a majority for our little fund in hand; the rest will depend on the opinion of the individual subscriber. Experience, our best guide, proves that in our present line, our labours do not rise in the opinion of the public, so as to obtain a support, such as we can make a dependance on; and it naturally follows that we are in a state of decay. If as men of resolution, aspiring at
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something that may be of service to posterity, we can establish a genuine naval navigation school, we shall act like ourselves if we pursue the plan proposed. Though disappointed in providing for the sons of sea officers, in the manner we intended, some other way of more importance may be suggested leading to the same end. If sea officers themselves now contribute so little to our support, it is a presumptive evidence that they do not think our institution necessary; or peradventure, that the education is too costly. This reason amongst others stands good for changing our system.

As to our receiving the sons of indifferent persons, on the principles of an establishment of a *free school*, as if navigation could not be taught on shore but by fortuitous acts of benevolence; it is a doctrine which will certainly be exploded.

If our present plan of munificence in favour of the sons of sea officers, does not appear supportable, it cannot appear eligible.

Of all vanities, the most vain is vexation of spirit ; and anxiety in such cases, is of the most fruitless kind.

If instead of falling into oblivion, we may take a part which will render our object valuable to the public, and worthy a *prince* to patronise, we shall rise higher in reputation. By adopting the most obvious means of establishing such a school, the effects of our labours may become permanent. The more rational our expectation, the more will our prospect brighten ; and we may be equally well assured, that we shall thus dispel the gloomy shadow of disappointment.

If it should please Heaven to prolong my life, though it were but a short time, I shall flatter myself with the hope of being useful : as the object increases in magnitude, it will be more suitable to our ambition. I feel a strong presumption that numbers of our fellow-subjects may see this object in the same point of view ; and that

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we may at a moderate expence, within the circle of our acquaintance, raise a sum to do a service to our country.

It is more than probable that a sufficient quantity of land may be bought on a scite in every respect advantageous: the quantity need not exceed a few acres. The scholars will study the more for having room to exercise themselves, to keep their bodies sound and active, whilst their morals are enriched, and religious duties promoted with a parental eye. Those who have children whom they wish to be bred up to serve their country at sea, may contemplate this object with an auspicious tenderness; and whilst they act the part of a father to their sons, they will prove themselves to be fathers to their country. By contributing to the erection of such a school-house, on such selected ground, their children's children may enjoy the benefit.

I write the language of my heart, supported by experience, and guarded against
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the evil of false confidence: I chuse the most probable good, and the most easily accomplished. Difficulties there may be: nothing great can be atchieved without labour and vigilance. You know with what zeal I have laboured in this vineyard; and now I offer the tribute of that zeal improved by observation, believing that we cannot maintain a *free* school. I offer it with candour, and I hope you will accept it with a discerning heart. I refer the decision, to the comparison of the prospect we now have, in the present train of this school, with respect to an annual support, and the other inconveniences we labour under. If we look forward with manly hopes, and a resolution to do the best thing practicable, according to our judgment, we may secure an object, on which we may reflect with pleasure to our latest hour, and run no hazard of being set in sands, or wrecking our vessel upon the rock of false confidence. Our situation will not admit of delay: poverty comes on like an armed man.

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Let us consider further, that the novelty of our object ceases, without a prospect of money in a reasonable time. If hereafter any supply should come, it may be devoted to its proper use, in the hands of the Trustees; and instead of our taking the sons of men of fortune, and charging ourselves with the care of them, the Trustees may be empowered to employ the money in favour of the sons of any proper petitioners, putting them on a common level with other scholars by paying the same price per ann. for them. In that case we delegate our power to the Trustees for the school-house: whether the money comes from donations or bequests, the Trustees for the *house* will be our substitutes as Governors, and so much as they receive, so much they will expend on the object. I am now providing for every contingency. If we get money and build, and retain the object of a naval school, we shall be guarded at every point, and act with zeal and uniformity. In this case, we should pay our annual benefactions, and get new
strength

strength upon a popular basis. Let us preserve our object, or an honourable retreat, and not spend to the last farthing and lose it, but consider how the greatest good may be done at the least expence. Let us shew a salutary example, such as may assist in reforming of morals. We may now erect a school of honour and dignity, in the line proposed, beyond any of the kind existing in these realms.

In the light our school appears to me at this time, I should arraign my own understanding, were I to flatter myself, and my integrity, were I to flatter you. We may raise a sum for building a school, the expence to cease: but to supply money from year to year, for the maintenance of an object so costly as our school is, and at this time, is not probable.

Every effort that regards the common good is sacred; but the degree of the sanctity depends on its duration. It is not a momentary sensation founded on the good-natured

tured passion of *compassion* only, but looking forward, with a manly confidence, in the consistency of a measure with respect to posterity. Regard to the good of our country should be cherished, as we regard the good of our souls which are immortal. You may easily perceive with what a spirit of freedom I give my reasons, and leave them to your consideration. I have bestowed some laborious hours upon it, and I am reluctant to resign the object of the school, because I think there is no necessity for such resignation.

The plan proposed, according to appearances, is consistent in its several parts, both with respect to the common good and the probability of carrying it into execution. When I look round me, and revolve in my mind, what I have seen in the metropolis, and in several parts of this kingdom, and in other nations, and have no where beheld any institution enjoying a stability without a *local establishment*, what conclusion can I draw? Where there is no stan-

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dard to resort to, the forces of a political body cannot be collected and brought into action. Let us be watchful not to forfeit the power of giving the school an establishment, which perhaps may prove as permanent as any school in the three kingdoms.

You are not to imagine that I am very anxious, with regard to any thing which respects this world; but whilst I live I would not put my candle under a bushel, if it can afford any light. So far as you are pleased to give me credit for the uprightness of my intention, or the consistency of this proposal, you will give it a fair examination before the hour of decision; and be assured, that I am, with the most sincere respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most faithful,

and most obedient servant,

*Maritime School at Chelsea,
October, 1783.*

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